

### Information to include in your discussion with legislators

- The Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) was established in 1974, 36 years ago.
- CDHI currently provides critical direct services to the community such as advocacy, counseling and certified sign language interpreting services. The services are accessible to all deaf and hard of hearing people.
- CDHI is mandated to monitor the statewide registry of Connecticut working sign language interpreters insuring that only "qualified" interpreters are working in the community.
- The Commission employs 43 sign language interpreters all nationally certified by The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf/National Association of the Deaf.
- Interpreting services are reimbursable.
- CDHI provided coverage for 16,600 interpreting assignments during 2009-2009; approximately 66,400 hours of interpreting services were provided by 43 part-time interpreters.
- Average number of requests each month is 1,600.
- The Commission provides interpreting services statewide which enable state agencies, private, and non-profit organizations/business to meet their legal obligations of equal access to goods and services throughout Connecticut. Seventy-Five Percent of interpreting services support requests made by other state agencies relating to state business.
- Many of the appointments provide communication access for health and safety related business pertaining to the State of Connecticut

Judicial Department, Department of Children and Families, State Police, local police departments and hospitals.

- Federal and State Laws [American with Disability Act (ADA)], mandate that the rights of citizens, including those with disabilities, be protected.
- Responsible to oversee the Telecommunication Relay Services mandated by the FCC.
- Counseling Services have not been available for the last 6 months, due to the retirement of three counselors. There was a waiting list of 53 individuals waiting for service, now that the agency has hired one counselor the numbers of requests have increased. Counseling services are available in American Sign Language, Signed English and through speech reading, all communication is accessible. Counseling that is provided without communication barriers is productive and empowers individuals to maintain their independence and live productive lives.
- The location is accessible by bus, and car with parking available. The office is client friendly and safe; they are greeted by an individual who can communicate in American Sign Language to assist them.
- During business hours the telephone is always answered by a person, the call never gets sent to voice mail, which is frustrating for individuals with hearing loss.
- Everyone feels welcome
- CCDHI acts as a central location for the Interpreter Training Program (ITP) at Northwestern Connecticut Community College